

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 SS-15 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, MX

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: US-MEXICO BILATERAL AIR TRANSPORT NEGOTIATIONS

1. THREE-MAN DELEGATION FROM CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO IS IN MEXICO CITY PROMOTING DIRECT AIR SERVICE FROM SAN FRANCISCO TO MEXICO. BESIDES EMBASSY, DELEGATION IS VISITING DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION (DBAC) JOSE RODRIGUEZ TORRES, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF AEROMEXICO ING. CANO AND OF MEXICANA ING. SOSA DE LA VEGA, UNDERSECRETARY OF TOURISM DE LA TORRE AND DEPUTY COORDINATOR OF NATIONAL TOURIST COUNCIL MORENO.

2. DELEGATION REPORTED TO TCO FOLLOWING CONVERSATION WITH THE DGAC. RODRIGUEZ TORRES SAID HE FELT THAT THE POINT THAT THE USDEL WILL CHOOSE WILL BE THE SFO-MEX AND BEYOND ROUTE. GOM WILLING TO GRANT THIS AND ACCEPT FACT THAT PAN AM WILL BE DESIGNATED CARRIER. HOWEVER, THEY ARE CONCERNED WITH FREQUENCY - THEY FEEL PAN AM WILL ONLY FLY ONCE A DAY. THEY ALSO FEEL THAT PAN AM WILL NOT PROMOTE THE ROUTE SUFFICIENTLY, AND MANY SEATS WILL BE BLOCKED BY PASSENGERS GOING ON TO POINTS FURTHER SOUTH. THEREFORE THE MEXDEL MAY WISH AN UNDERSTANDING THAT NO MORE THAN ONE HALF OF THE FLIGHTS WILL BE BEYOND MEXICO CITY.

3. RODRIGUEZ TORRES TOLD THE SAN FRANCISCANS THAT HIS GOAL

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WAS TO HAVE THE USDEL PICK ONE OF THE FOUR POINTS AND NEGOTI-

TIATE A SETTLEMENT ON THAT POINT NEXT WEEK. A SUBSEQUENT SESSION COULD BE CALLED FOR SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER TO DISCUSS THE OTHER POINTS. BUT, HE SAID THAT IF HE WERE IN CHARGE OF THE USDEL HE WOULD WAIT FOR THE SECOND SESSION UNTIL THE NEW GOM ADMINISTRATION TAKES OFFICE NEXT YEAR, WHICH WILL HAVE NEW IDEAS AND INTERESTS (IMPLYING TOURISM). HE CONFIRMED THAT HE WILL NOT CARRY OVER INTO THE LOPEZ PORTILLO REGIME, AND PLANS TO TAKE A ONE-YEAR VACATION.

4. THE SAN FRANCISCANS REPORTED FURTHER THAT THEY FEEL THAT IF THESE DISCUSSIONS ARE SUCCESSFUL, THE SUBSEQUENT SESSION WOULD NEGOTIATE A POINT PICKED BY THE MEXICANS. ALSO THAT THE CHANCE OF ELIMINATING THE MANDATORY MERIDA STOP FOR PAN AM IS VERY SLIM, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE. (THEY HAVE REPORTED THEIR CONVERSATION ALSO TO SETH PREECE OF PAN AM). THE DGAC ALSO TOLD THEM THAT HE FEELS THAT OUR SECOND CHOICE, AFTER SFO-MEX-BEYOND, IS LOS ANGELES-GUADALAJARA-MEXICAN WEST COAST. AGAIN, IF IT WERE HIS CHOICE, HE WOULD HAVE THAT AS HIS FIRST CHOICE DUE TO THE GREATER ECONOMIC BENEFIT, AND NOT HAVING TO DISADVANTAGE AN AIR CARRIER (I.E. WESTERN). THE DGAC FURTHER SAID THAT THE U.S. SHOULD PUSH TO REMOVE THE RESTRICTIONS ON THE HUGHES AIR WEST ROUTES. HE FEELS THAT THEY ARE BEING UNNECESSARILY DISADVANTAGED.

5. THE SAN FRANCISCANS' OTHER CALLS WERE UNEVENTFUL, THOUGH CORDIAL. BOTH MEXICANA AND AEROMEXICO SAID THEY EXPECTED TO GET THE SFO-MEX ROUTE, WITH AEROMEXICO TALKING OF A SERVICE ALSO TO HAWAII.

6. THIS LAST SUNDAY AND MONDAY (FEB 22-23), GOM PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA INVITED REPRESENTATIVES OF MEXICAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND THE TOURIST INDUSTRY TO HIS LOS PINOS RESIDENCE TO DISCUSS THE UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS. WHILE EMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMED BY THOSE PRESENT THAT NOTHING NEW WAS DISCUSSED, THE MEETING IS UNUSUAL IN THAT IT REPORTEDLY NEVER TOOK PLACE BEFORE PREVIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. THE SAME TWO VIEWS WERE PRESENTED, WITH RODRIGUEZ TORRES AND THE MEXICAN CARRIERS OPPOSED TO GRANTING THE U.S. ADDITIONAL FIFTH FREEDOMS, WHILE THE TOURIST INTERESTS WERE IN FAVOR. THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE REMAINED NEUTRAL. NO CONCLUSIONS WERE REACHED, AND ECHEVERRIA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS NOT PRESENT FOR THE END.

7. IT IS KNOWN THAT ECHEVERRIA MET WITH GOM SECRETARY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION EUGENIO MENDEZ DOCURRO ON FEB 6 AND WITH GOM SECRETARY OF TOURISM ON FEB 20 CONCERNING THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND WILL MEET WITH THEM AGAIN THIS WEEKEND. CONCLUSIONS, IF ANY, ARE NOT YET KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY.

8. THE LOCAL PAN AM REPRESENTATIVE HAS INFORMED THE EMBASSY THAT HE FEELS THAT THE GOM IS SINCERELY CONSIDERING A SETTLEMENT, EVEN IF IT INVOLVES A FIFTH FREEDOM. DANGER IS THAT THEY WILL ASK TOO MUCH. HE ALSO FEELS THAT IF THE NEGOTIATIONS REACH AN IMPASSE AND IF THE USDEL INSISTS ON A 3-5 YEAR EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING AGREEMENT THAT THE MEXDEL WILL "CRUMBLE" AND REACH AN AGREEMENT. HE NOTES A 5.6 PERCENT DECREASE IN TOURISM IN MEXICO LAST YEAR AND A 15 PERCENT (PRELIMINARY FIGURES) DECREASE SO FAR THIS YEAR.

9. ON THE OTHER HAND THE LOCAL BRANIFF REPRESENTATIVE FEELS THAT WHILE ECHEVERRIA WANTS A SETTLEMENT NOW TO ADD TO HIS LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, HE WILL NOT AGREE TO A FIFTH FREEDOM FOR POLITICAL REASONS. HE WILL ASK TOO HIGH A PRICE, FULLY KNOWING THAT IT WILL BE UNACCEPTABLE. THE BRANIFF REP FURTHER ADVISED THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD PICK UP WHERE THEY LEFT OFF-TO CHANGE NOW WOULD ANGER ECHEVERRIA. ALSO, AN EXTENSION INTO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE TRANSPARENT, AND ALSO INCUR ECHEVERRIA'S IRE. HE NOTED THAT IT WILL BE THE U.S. CARRIERS THAT WILL PAY THE PRICE.
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